

The duality of the ever-dreamy tom wingfield essay



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The duality of the ever-dreamy Tom Wingfield.

The faded southern belle who could not face the fact that her prime time is up. The shyly old-fashioned and fragile Laura Wingfield. How could Tennessee Williams daringly put these mixtures of personalities under one roof as a lower-middle class American family who lacked a father figure? All three characters are clearly described as characters who 'manufacture illusions' that, in the end, are finally destroyed by reality; thus how can it be possible for all three to live together as responsible family members? In Tennessee Williams' "The Glass Menagerie", it is all about the distortion of reality and the struggle between differentiating reality and appearance. Williams almost unrealistically and literally 'distorted reality' itself as he mixed the impossible Amanda, Tom and Laura Wingfield into one batter of bittersweet yet fragile family dependence and responsibility, whereupon Amanda acts as the second provider of the family and the one who ensures her children's success, Tom being responsible as the father-figure replacement in the family and Laura as the dependent character who is only responsible for minor domestic issues.

Amanda Wingfield is a character of utmost complexity. Amanda, as had been explained by Williams himself, "is not paranoiac but her life is paranoia." A faded southern belle who had a traditional southern upbringing, Amanda can be safely said as one of the most unrealistic characters of the story as she had suffered a drastic economic and social reversal in her life. Although her husband had left her, she often gives the impression as if her husband is merely traveling and will be back, whereupon she praises him one moment and defames him the next. This proves that Amanda lives a life of paranoia, <https://assignbuster.com/the-duality-of-the-ever-dreamy-tom-wingfield-essay/>

withdrawing from reality into fantasies; often times seeing things that are not there, a confused character of inconsistencies and illusions. We see a glimpse of this and how she sets high and often unrealistic goals and expectations for her children when Amanda conveys to Laura after her daughter wearily argues that she is not bound for marriage as she is physically disadvantaged, “ Nonsense! Laura, I’ve told you never, never to use that word.

Why, you’re not crippled, you just have a little defect-hardly noticeable even! (Williams, 45). ” But Laura, in real life, is a passive, shy woman who is disadvantaged by her slight cripple. Other than these attributions, Amanda can also be seen as a headstrong, gentle and almost wise patronizing mother who cares very much for her own children’s welfare and success. Although she may seem terribly pushy at times, tenderness exists in her strong endurance and tireless persistence of nagging to make sure the success of her children even in the most trivial issues, proving again that she is a character that has good intentions but is simply deeply flawed, hence misunderstood. Her willingness to sacrifice for the ones that she love is shown as she willingly accepts her job as a humiliating magazine subscription sales woman to enhance Laura’s chances of marriage and by putting Laura to a business college to ensure her success in life, which resulted in a dismal failure.

Due to Laura’s passively shy personality and physical disadvantage, Amanda’s motherly responsibility towards Laura as her caretaker is to ensure that she is properly married and successful in her future life so that she may not become like Amanda herself; a woman who is abandoned by <https://assignbuster.com/the-duality-of-the-ever-dreamy-tom-wingfield-essay/>

her husband and suffering from an economic and social reversal. Although Amanda mostly depends on Tom economically, her responsibility towards both Laura and Tom serves as the second family provider, using the money she makes to enhance Laura's marriage and success prospects by putting her to business college. To Amanda, Tom is her 'right hand bower', whereupon she is responsible to him in the means of being the second family provider after himself. She feels personally responsible for his success and to keep him away from his father's habits, fearing that he will break away and go with the Merchant Marines to go to far places like his father. Yet Amanda also feels responsible to ensure that he will also enhance Laura's marriage prospects by making sacrifices, "As soon as Laura has got somebody to take care of her, married, a home of her own, independent-why, then you'll be free to go wherever you please..

. But until that time you have to look out for your sister. I say for your sister because she is young and dependent. (Williams, 66). "To Tennessee Williams, Laura Wingfield is a character whose situation is even graver than Amanda.

As a childhood illness had left her crippled, she develops into an emotionally crippled character that is shy, passive as fragile as glass, as if living in her own glass menagerie and too fragile to move herself. Although Laura is a character who does not do much other than stay at home, play old records and collect glass, she is the axis to which the plot turns. Laura Wingfield lives in her own little world, accompanied by old music and her little glass animal figures. As a physically and mentally frail person, she becomes almost secluded and antisocial, as had been described by Amanda herself, "I put <https://assignbuster.com/the-duality-of-the-ever-dreamy-tom-wingfield-essay/>

her in business college-a dismal failure! Frightened her so it made her sick at the stomach. I took her to the Young People's League at the church. Another fiasco.

She spoke to nobody, nobody spoke to her. (Williams, 66). " Laura is correctly described by Jim O'Connor that she is an old fashioned, home girl, judging her with the old notion of ' inferiority complex' whereupon he noticed that Laura is very self-conscious of and low-rates herself. Yet despite Laura's fragility, she is a character who embodies pure and true compassion, shown when Amanda revealed to Tom that she cried over her impression of him being unhappy in the Wingfield household in Scene Four. This fear of losing Tom displays that Laura is a person who cares a lot for her family and their cohesiveness.

Laura proves herself as a stronger character than we think as displayed by how she handles the days she wanders the city to avoid her business classes. Laura's responsibilities towards her family members are not as significant as Tom and Amanda's, as Laura is a character who is dependent upon her family members due to her physical and psychological limits. But yet in a deeper sense, Laura is responsible towards Tom as the reason why he stays in the Wingfield household despite his Merchant Marine dreams, as shown by the care he displayed when he gave her the magic scarf after coming back home from the movies and how he could not get over her when he left the household in his last line. As for Amanda, Laura is responsible towards her as the re-creator of her own youth, expecting her to emulate her past.

Tom Wingfield, as a narrator, plays a double role in the play, as a character that recollects and acts the recollections. Like Amanda, Tom is often times an inconsistent, confused character, as displayed by how he presents to the audience a clear explanation of situations compared to his emotional, restless being he acts based on his own memory. Following his mother's footsteps, Tom lives in his own dreamy world, trying to escape reality by writing poetry, read literature and go to the movies for the thrill of adventure whilst dreaming of higher things such as joining the Merchant Marines and traveling. Tom is headstrong, angry and patient at the same time, and caring towards his family.

Although he could not stand the Wingfield household, he stays to support Amanda and Laura but eventually leaves, and even despite Amanda's constant nagging, he gives in to his sister's advice to behave well towards her. Although in the end Tom's feelings towards Amanda and Laura seems indifferent and cruel as he abandoned them, Williams himself explained that " His nature is not remorseless, but to escape from a trap he has to act without pity (Williams, 22). He illustrates his emotional attachment towards Laura as when he tried to escape yet again from her haunting image after he descended the fire escape for the last time. Tom Wingfield's responsibility towards his family members is as the main family provider, hence the father figure replacement. Tom complies with Amanda's perception of his as being responsible towards his family as the ' right hand bower' and Laura's matchmaker. Yet Tom in nature is independent and thus he decided break away by leaving his family.

In truth, it can be seen that Tom does not want to be responsible for anything but just escape reality, shown by how he showed his detest towards the warehouse to Amanda, " You think I'm crazy about the warehouse?... I'd rather somebody pick up a crowbar and battered out my brains...

every time you come in yelling that Goddamn " Rise and Shine! "... I say to myself " How lucky dead people are! " But I get up.

Fore sixty-five dollars a month I give up all that I dream of doing and being ever! (Williams, 52)". Is there a thin line between fantasy and reality? It seems that Tennessee Williams do not think so. Amanda, Laura and Tom Wingfield all live in their own little worlds, trying to escape harsh reality by different ways of escapism. But no matter how much they try to escape reality, their responsibilities towards each other never fail to ' weigh them down back to earth. ' Amanda Wingfield, a dreamy, deeply flawed but tender mother, is responsible towards her children as the second family provider in order to enhance her daughter's marriage prospects and to keep Tom away from his father's habits.

Tom Wingfield, a hardheaded but almost patient son who is responsible as the primary family provider and expected to be responsible towards his family as to find a suitor for his sister. Laura Wingfield, the fragile, rare and ever-peculiar glass unicorn and blue rose, is expected to, like a transparent glass, take on Amanda's colors as the re-creator of her past and as Tom's reason to stay in the household. Their fantasies, it seems, were slowly undermined by their own responsibilities.